



Fruits and Veggies.....Does More Matter?

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YES, YES, YES!!!!!! If you want to stay healthy, 13 servings per day are now included in the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. This is a total of 6 ½ cups per day, not hard to reach at all with a little planning. By eating a piece of fruit with each meal, and a cup of non-starchy veggies at lunch and dinner, you have consumed 7 servings. Next, try some fruit as a snack.

What to shop for in these delectable desserts??

Don't buy more than you can eat in a few days

Eight apples, four peaches, three bananas and five apricots may seem sensible at checkout but when they all ripen two days later, you better be prepared to start eating or cooking. Fruits cook well, either as stand alones or as marinades, salsas, or as condiments.

Fruits and vegetables ripen at room temperature

Ripen fruit on the counter top, not in the refrigerator. It'll take about two days for fruit to soften; eat it then or refrigerate for two to three more days. Cold temperatures slow ripening process. For optimal flavor, bring to room temperature before eating.

Gently feel your fruit when shopping

Most fruits, with the exception of cherries, are firm; avoid those that are as hard as golf balls. Fruits should yield a bit too slight pressure and soften even more at room temperature.

Color and smell

Avoid fruit with green undertone. These have been picked too early and will not have an abundance of flavor. Fruit should have a fragranced odor. If you can't smell anything, keep shopping. As well, if the smell is too pungent, the fruit has already ripened and should be consumed the same day as purchase.

Health Benefits of increased fruit and vegetable consumption

Studies demonstrate people lose more weight consuming more fruits and vegetables than the others who do not, and are great sources of water and fiber in the diet. Fruits and vegetables provide VOLUME, which makes people feel full and stay full longer than other foods.

Fruits and vegetables also improve gastrointestinal health. Studies in the Polyp Prevention Trial (4-year study done by the NCI April 2000) demonstrated participants who increased their intake of fruits and vegetables and decreased their fat intake lost a significant amount of weight in 1 year.

Yes, fruits and veggies do matter!